



**The Allergy and Environmental Health Association**  
10 George Street North, Cambridge, Ontario N1S 2M7  
Telephone (519) 740-6979

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Send Reply to: 6267 Castille Court  
Orléans, Ontario  
K1C 1X4

**Patrons:**  
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McGibbon**  
Former Lieutenant-  
Governor of Ontario

**Dr. William Rea**  
First World  
Professorial Chair  
in Environmental  
Medicine,  
University of Surrey

The Hon Evelyn Gigantes, MPP,  
Minister of Health,  
Queen's Park,  
Toronto, Ontario.

M7A 1A2

19 January 1991

ATT: Cathy Fooks

(Paul) DUPLICATE

Dear Ms Gigantes,

Many NDP members have pressed for humane treatment of persons disabled by environmental sensitivities. The various letters sent by NDP members over the past decade indicate that you would have support in your caucus and cabinet for concerted action on attitudinal, health, and social concerns related to this group.

Perhaps the largest payoffs (savings) will be found in those high risk groups whose chronic health problems may be caused by undiagnosed sensitivities. These persons have suffered extreme damages because of past arbitrary and insupportable damaging statements and actions from various parties, including some of your current officials.

I do not think that officials should be free of responsibility when they make damaging statements on the basis of an absence of information. It is one thing to say "I don't know"; quite another to state, as some of your officials have done, that members of an identifiable group are not of sound mind. These statements, coming from "responsible" authorities, have caused families to break up, people to lose their careers, and, as you mentioned in a TV all-candidates meeting, several persons have committed suicide due to bigotry fostered and tolerated by the very people who are responsible to help.

Several Health officials fostered this bigotry directly (without substantiation). Others in your ministry have told me repeatedly and consistently that the main stumbling block has been that senior Ministry officials consider the problem to be "all in the mind".

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If services were denied to African Canadians, or women, on the expressed basis that some in the community have bigoted attitudes towards this group, government officials responsible would be disciplined. Why would you deal differently with those who have directly and indirectly contributed to millions of dollars damages accrued by our members?

However, such appropriate discipline has been referred to as a "witchhunt" by members of your staff (who, incidently, might reflect on the offensiveness of that term to witches). Given this reluctance to discipline those who have irresponsibly abused members of this disabled group, by what means would you suggest we prevent such abuse by your officials of residents of the province in the future? Persons with chronic fatigue and post-polio syndrome have experienced similar abuse, and it would seem politic to make some effort to straighten out your Ministry's staff.

Perhaps you will remember your letter of 28 July, 1986, to the Health Minister of the day:

"Find out what is happening with environmental sensitivity, for Heaven's sake. These are the issues of the 1980's and 1990's. You have the chance to lead - why not do it?"

Sincerely

DUPLICATE

Chris Brown  
Branch President - Ottawa  
(613) 837-7173